

**BUFFALO FIELD CAMPAIGN**

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Chairman Lee Randall and members of the House Agriculture committee
Montana House of Representatives
PO Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

Mr. Chairman and members of the House Agriculture committee,

On behalf of Buffalo Field Campaign I am submitting testimony on SB 305. Mr. Chairman, I would also request that my testimony be shared with committee members and entered into the hearing record. Thank you.

Buffalo Field Campaign is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) whose mission is to stop the slaughter of Yellowstone's wild buffalo herd, protect the natural habitat of wild free-roaming buffalo and native wildlife, and to work with people of all Nations to honor the sacredness of the wild buffalo.

Buffalo Field Campaign is located in West Yellowstone, Gallatin County, Montana, and is supported by volunteers and citizens in Montana and by people from around the world who value America's native wildlife and the ecosystems upon which they depend, and enjoy the natural wonders of our irreplaceable public lands.

As an organization and on behalf of our members, Buffalo Field Campaign is concerned and actively involved with protecting the last remaining descendants of indigenous buffalo in North America to occupy their original range, and securing long-term protection for viable populations of wild buffalo and year-round habitat.

Buffalo Field Campaign opposes SB 305 and the sponsor's attempt to re-define the legal classification of wild buffalo as a wildlife species.

SB 305 revises the definition of wild buffalo as "never" been reduced to captivity and "never" owned by a person.

A wild buffalo that "has not" been reduced to captivity and "is not" owned by a person is the current definition.

Under SB 305, any buffalo reintroduced or reduced to some form of captivity would not be treated under the law as wild buffalo in Montana.

SB 305 would also prevent any reintroduced buffalo from being recognized in the law as a native wildlife species in Montana.

If wild buffalo lose their legal classification as a wildlife species under SB 305, the sponsor should be asked what classification remains in the law? If the only remaining classification is that of livestock, how would SB 305 assign 'ownership'?

Because both the Dept. of Livestock and Yellowstone National Park have reduced wild buffalo to captivity, the sponsor should be asked how SB 305 affects those members who have been reduced to captivity.

If buffalo have been released from captivity, is their legal status now that of domestic bison? If so, how does SB 305 assign ownership?

Part of the Yellowstone buffalo population was also reintroduced into captivity at the Lamar Buffalo Ranch in the early 1900s.

The sponsor should be asked how SB 305 affects those members of the population that were reintroduced and released from captivity but bred with wild buffalo "never" reduced to captivity and "never" owned by a person.

There is no legal purpose served in re-defining the current definition of wild buffalo as SB 305 would have it.

The current definition is clear: wildlife is not 'owned' like property, and is free from captivity.

SB 305 is not amendable. Thank you for taking action to by voting to defeat SB 305.

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